

Message Text

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PAGE 01 RABAT 02307 191723Z

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SUBJECT: LOS - LOCAL PRESS COVERAGE

REF: STATE 070173

1. THE AMOCO-CADIZ AFFAIR, COMING ON THE EVE OF THE SEVENTH LOS SESSION, PROVOKED A RASH OF NEWS -- MOSTLY FRENCH SOURCED -- AND LOCAL COMMENTARY IN THE MOROCCAN PRESS. MOROCCO HAS ALWAYS BEEN SENSITIVE TO THE QUESTION OF POLLUTION, BOTH FROM THE POINT OF VIEW OF ITS STATUS AS A TOURIST CENTER AND AS THE OCCUPANT OF ONE SIDE OF ONE OF THE WORLD'S MOST IMPORTANT WATERWAYS. TWO ARTICLE IN L'OPINION, APRIL 6-7, WRITTEN BY MIDDLE LEVEL MEMBERS OF THE GOM'S LOS TEAM, REPEATED SOME OF MOROCCO'S TRADITIONAL CONCERN ON POLLUTION "CONTROLS" IN THE STRAITS. ALTHOUGH THERE WAS A DISCLAIMER TO THE EFFECT THAT THE ARTICLES WERE THE AUTHORS' PERSONAL OPINIONS, THE CALL FOR "GUARANTEES" FOR COASTAL STATES STRICKEN BY POLLUTION WAS CONSISTENT WITH THE TRADITIONAL GOM POSITION. THE ARTICLES ALSO CALLED FOR A REINFORCEMENT OF MOROCCO'S SURVEILLANCE CAPABILITIES, CITING THE NEED FOR "RADAR, SONAR, BEACONS, AND FRIGATES".

2. THERE HAVE BEEN NO EDITORIALS TO DATE ON THE TALKS

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PAGE 02 RABAT 02307 191723Z

BUT A NUMBER OF ARTICLES HAVE APPEARED IN BOTH THE PRO-GOVERNMENT AND OPPOSITION PRESS. RECURRING THEMES IN THESE ARTICLES -- PROBABLY AIDED BY MFA BACKGROUNDING -- INCLUDED:

-- THE CONFERENCE WAS JUST "ANOTHER FORM OF STRUGGLE BETWEEN RICH AND POOR NATIONS" (AL MITHAQ AL WATANI, APRIL 5)

-- THE INDUSTRIALIZED COUNTRIES, "PROVING THEIR SELFISHNESS" (AL MAGHRIB, MARCH 31), COULD NOT AWAIT THE RESULTS OF THE CONFERENCE BEFORE BEGINNING THEIR EXPLOITATION OF THE SEA. (THE U.S. WAS MOST FREQUENTLY CRITICIZED IN THIS REGARD, ALTHOUGH THE SOVIETS AND JAPANESE WERE ALSO CITED BY SOME WRITERS.)

-- THE DRAFT U.S. LEGISLATION AND U.S. "THREAT" TO WITHDRAW FROM THE CONFERENCE WERE FREQUENTLY CITED AS "EVIDENCE" OF THE U.S.'S "BAD FAITH". (L'OPION APRIL 16).

3. COMMENT: AS IN MOST OF THE THIRD WORLD, THE U.S. HAS AN IMAGE PROBLEM HERE ON LOS WHICH IS, IN THE SHORT AND MEDIUM TERM, PROBABLY INSOLUBLE. THERE IS A WIDE LACK OF UNDERSTANDING OF THIS COMPLEX SUBJECT, AND IT CONTAINS ELEMENTS WHICH READILY LEND THEMSELVES TO DEMAGOGUERY. AS THE GOM SHARES MANY OF THESE VIEWS, WE EXPECT PRESS CRITICISM ON THIS SUBJECT TO CONTINUE.

ANDERSON

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